

# **Tamworth Conservation Commission**

Draft Minutes – February 11, 2013

*Draft minutes to be reviewed and approved at a subsequent meeting*

**Call to Order** – Ned called meeting to order at 7:07pm. Commissioners present were Ned Beecher (Chair), Nelson O'Bryan, Rich Gerard, Chele Miller, Bob Seston, William Batchelder, and Margaret Rieser.

Also present: Skip Nason, Planning Board; David Little, CLRC; John Mersfelder, CLRC; John Watkins; Sam Martin; Tom Howe and Martha Twombly of SPNHF via telephone conference call (for CLRC Reich and Gilman-West discussion only)

**Approval of Minutes for 01/10/2013** – Nelson moved to accept, Batch seconded, motion carried.

## **Conservation Lands Review Committee – Reich and Gilman-West Land Conservation Projects**

**Overview:** Ned announced that he moved CLRC up in the agenda to accommodate a conference call with Tom Howe and Martha Twombly of SPNHF for discussion of funding issues for the two land conservation projects that SPNHF is spearheading. After getting Tom and Martha on the speakerphone, Ned gave a review of the recent CLRC meeting where four projects were discussed. Concerning the two projects currently under consideration: Reich is in progress, TCC should expect a map soon from the Thorne Surveys. CLRC is recommending to TCC that the Gilman Project be backed for \$15,000. This was originally proposed to be a guarantee that if CLRC couldn't raise all the funds through private donations, the difference would be covered by money from the Conservation Fund. Tom Howe's concern is that TCC and SPNHF would be competing for the same funds; it would be better if TCC made a firm commitment of funding from the Conservation Fund and then helped SPNHF in its fundraising efforts.

**Project Budget:** TCC reviewed a spreadsheet drawn up by Tom Howe. Tom addressed questions and concerns regarding administrative costs and property value; Tom stated that the \$55,000 listed for cost of property would be used as a hard figure and wouldn't change unless the appraisal showed the value to be less, which was almost certain to not happen. There will be a P&S with fundraising condition built into it. Martha said it was better to look at the total cost in terms of the complete project and not just the land acquisition. Closing date will be set to allow for summertime fundraising. Chele recommended that local fundraising should be earmarked for line items that address local interest, and not just as money going to SPNHF. Tom pointed out that Tamworth will acquire a conservation easement that will be worth more than the \$15,000 CLRC is recommending.

**TCC Participation in Project:** Discussed the use(s) of the conservation fund for procuring conservation land and how often and for how much private donors could/should be solicited. Nelson suggested combining fundraising for the Reich and Gilman-West. Tom agreed that would make a better project; combined numbers would be on the order of \$145,000 for 170 acres total. Tom could not suggest a solid number for total commitment required from fundraising (including any Conservation Fund contribution by TCC), because of unknowns in what would be available from internal SPNHF sources. Conference call with Tom and Martha ended. Further discussion on use of Conservation Fund. Nelson pointed out that \$7800 has already been committed to the Reich project, which is now suggested to be included in the current proposed fundraising effort. Bob suggested that TCC stewardship/administrative costs should be calculated and added to an expense line item in the project budget. Further discussion concerning cost estimates of other possible upcoming projects and how they might affect the

Conservation Fund.

**Decisions:**

1. Bob moved to commit up to \$15,000 from the Conservation Fund to make up any fundraising shortfall on the project (*shortfall to be shared by TCC and SPNHF*) on a 50-50 basis. Margaret seconded. Discussion concerning what constituted a shortfall. Agreed that it included the whole project, which would be ~\$95,000 plus whatever TCC adds for administrative/stewardship costs. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Ned solicited a motion for TCC involvement in fundraising activities. He suggested that the CLRC members be polled. Chele suggested that TCC simply state that if CLRC or any members of CLRC wish to get involved in fundraising they are authorized by TCC to do so. TCC agreed by consensus that CLRC members may participate in fundraising activities with SPNHF. TCC agreed by consensus that the Commission will allow SPNHF to use its name in fundraising activities for this project.
3. TCC agreed that legal costs for acquiring the easement and the administrative and stewardship costs projected for maintaining the easement should be added to the project budget. Ned asked CLRC to calculate these costs.

**Administrative**

**Treasurer's Report** – Monthly statement is not available; there have been no expenses submitted as of this date.

**Membership** – Chele has agreed to accept another 3-year term. Margaret will decline serving another term. A notice soliciting a new commissioner should be published. Ned reported Eric Dube and someone he knows are interested in serving as an alternate; Eric will likely attend the March TCC meeting.

**Wetlands and Sub-surface Committee: Wetlands Matters --** Petitioned ballot initiatives to repeal Wetlands Conservation Ordinance

Ned reviewed actions so far: Letter sent to Selectmen; after consultation with Town Attorney the Selectmen declined to take a vote on their stand on the ballot petitions. The Lyceum has invited TCC to participate in a non-acrimonious debate, particulars yet to be determined [March 2, 2-4 pm]. Bob Wheeler may ask participation at Candidates Night, March 4. Ned is willing to get involved in both of these. Everyone is encouraged to do letter writing and word-of-mouth about voting “no” on Articles 2 & 3 and “yes” on Article 4 (floodplain update).

**Committee/Coordinator Reports**

**Public Education and Outreach** – The Lyceum is featuring TCC for the month of February. The display is all set up.

**Easement Monitoring** – The Administrative Assistant handed out an updated easement inventory (C5) to be inserted in all Commissioner handbooks.

**Managed Lands and Trails** – Nelson has a trail project that can wait for discussion at the next meeting.

**Other Business** – Ned reported that he has talked with Jeb Bradley, who sponsored the bill in NH General Court for allowing municipal Conservation Commissions to be elected rather than appointed. The NHACC is opposing this legislation, as they have opposed similar legislation in the past.

**Adjourn** – Margaret moved, Nelson seconded, motion carried 9:36 pm.

*Submitted by Chris Conrod, TCC Administrative Assistant.*